



May 22, 2006

Kenneth Holmberg  
Board of Assessors  
Town Hall  
Main Street  
New Salem, MA 01355

Re: Farm Plate  
Our File No. 2006-43

Dear Mr. Holmberg:

You posed several questions concerning motor vehicle excise abatement procedure upon sale of a farm vehicle which was not used exclusively for farm purposes.

You inquired whether the taxpayer's statement about the sale on a signed abatement application was legally sufficient to receive the abatement. You then inquired about the abatement eligibility criteria. We contacted the Registry of Motor Vehicles and learned there is an annual renewal requirement for the farm plate. A compliance statement must be submitted to the Registry which shows all the vehicles which will use the farm plate. Decals must be issued for all such vehicles since any vehicle with a decal is deemed registered for excise purposes. A taxpayer seeking the abatement must furnish proof of eligibility by establishing that a transfer of ownership has occurred by sale, trade or otherwise. Where the taxpayer claims to have sold or traded the farm vehicle, he must present documentation of the transfer of title, i.e., a bill of sale or documentation showing the trade-in. In addition, the owner must remove the decal and return it to the Registry of Motor Vehicles, or provide a notarized statement which is akin to a lost plate certificate. The Registry deems this action to be a cancellation of the registration for excise purposes.

In response to your third question, if the vehicle had been sold in February 2005, even though it appeared on the list sent by the Registry in May 2005, the taxpayer would be eligible for a partial abatement of the 2005 excise if the conditions described above were satisfied.

We hope this information proves helpful.

Very truly yours,

Kathleen Colleary, Chief  
Bureau of Municipal Finance Law

KC/JFC